

Prep steps: Welcome to the world of job searching

Written by Julie Desmond
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Every day, countless well-trained, well-educated, dedicated and successful people join the ranks of the newly unemployed. Many have been gainfully employed for years, if not decades. For some, looking for work seems like the equivalent of stepping off an airplane in a foreign land where the language and the landscape are completely unfamiliar. You will get used to living with the natives, but before you actually begin job search journey, pack your bags, both physically and mentally. Whether looking for work in carpentry, food service or aerospace engineering, every job seeker needs a few basic necessities.

Computer access: at home, at a local library, at an internet café. You don't have to pay for it, but you do have to have regular access to the www.

Email: gmail, hotmail, and yahoo are a few of the many sites offering free email addresses. Choose one and set up a professional address that includes all or part of your name. Right or wrong, nicknames will sometimes raise questions about your level of professionalism. Obscure letter/number combinations are secure, but will not be instantly recognizable to a hiring manager at a time when you want to be recognized and remembered.

Telephone: a working phone is obviously a critical tool for job seekers. What people forget, though, is that you also need a short, professional message on your voicemail, and you need to check your voicemail frequently. Answer your phone whenever possible, and return calls promptly. There is no excuse for not returning a phone call.

Resilience and persistence: I'm going to say this more than once as we go through this process: no one can guarantee you a job, but remember it's really up to you. Pay attention,

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do the right things, and you will succeed. Even if “there aren’t any jobs,” keep looking. If you’re good, you will eventually find work.

24/7 is too much of anything. Even God and Olympic athletes take breaks for rest and relaxation. Be realistic about the time you put into your job search. Four to five hours a day is about all a person can take. But remember, cheaters never prosper. Be honest with yourself by keeping track of the time you spend looking for work. Jot down a start time, and stick with it until your planned end time. Once you have logged the hours and activities you promised yourself, don’t beat yourself up for stepping away from your search for a few hours. Taking a search break to exercise, clean a closet, or coach your kids’ soccer game will keep your head clear and reenergize you for the next day’s work on your search.

Julie Desmond is Senior Talent Consultant with the Walstrom Group in Minneapolis. Write to Julie@insightnews.com.